



State Senator
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financial Support for Grandparents and Guardians at Last!

On June 26, 2008, the Michigan Senate approved my bill, SB 170; and in August, Governor Jennifer Granholm signed it into law. Public Act 260 will provide subsidies by the Department of Human Services (DHS) to court-appointed guardians or relative caregivers of children in the foster care system. For the first time in Michigan history, grandparents and/or relative guardians are eligible to receive monthly support payments equal to those given to foster parents.

I have worked on this bill for more than eight years both in the House and the Senate and on August 4 Governor Jennifer Granholm signed the bill into law, signaling a thrilling victory for the futures of Michigan children.

While the primary goal of DHS is to keep families together and intact, often parental mental or physical health problems, military service or other

extenuating circumstances require that children be removed from the home. And while placement with relatives is preferable, these caregivers often do not have the necessary financial resources to provide for the child's needs.

The 2008-2009 DHS budget appropriates about \$4.6 million for a program which will provide subsidized

guardianships for hundreds of children for the remainder of the year.

Subsidized guardianship will not only reduce strain on the foster care system, but it will assure that children are placed in familiar and stable homes during an emotionally difficult time. And what better gift can we provide these children than safe and loving homes.



Sen. Clark-Coleman (right of center) and advocates of kinship care flank Gov. Granholm (center) at the ceremonial signing of SB 170, which has now become Michigan law. This group was on the front lines fighting to keep families together.

E-News Report



The Clark-Coleman E-News Report is up and running and we would love for you to be a part of it. To subscribe, please send your e-mail address to seniclarkcoleman@senate.michigan.gov and write "e-news add" in the subject line. You can check out the Senator's latest activities in Lansing and in the District by visiting her Senate website at www.senate.mi.gov/clark-coleman.

State Senator · Irma Clark-Coleman

Serving the 3rd District Constituents

2008-2009 Budget Close To Completion

We have been working hard in Lansing to reach a compromise on next year's budget. Here is a recap of the agreements to date:

The **Department of Human Services** budget was cut by \$31.3 million, in large part due to caseload reductions. However, DHS also funded 83 new positions in the licensing, foster care and adoption contract monitoring, and Child Protective Services areas. Monthly increases in the Family Independence Program and raises in the state's children's clothing allowance

were accomplished through federal funding.

Other cuts included the **Department of State Police**, though it retained funding for a 100-member trooper school; the **Department of Agriculture**; the **Department of Corrections**, mostly due to staffing changes; the **Department of Environmental Quality**, though it will include funding to monitor Michigan's new water withdrawal regulations; and the **Department of Education**, which does NOT include aid to Michigan schools. That funding is part of the School Aid budget.

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Senator Clark-Coleman with her guests and Governor Jennifer Granholm at the ceremonial bill signing for Senate Bill 170. SB 170, now Public Act 260 of 2008, will create the "Subsidized Guardianship Assistance Act" to provide financial support to court-appointed guardians or relatives of abused and neglected children. Left to right: Paul Bridgewater, President and CEO of the Detroit Area Agency on Aging; Governor Granholm; Senator Clark-Coleman; and Juanita Bridgewater, President of Bridging Generations.

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The **School Aid** budget highlights include a per pupil increase of between \$56 and \$112, with larger amounts going to lower-funded school districts. The Governor’s small high school initiative received \$15 million (see related story). And there will be \$5 million increases both for school readiness and early childhood programs.

The **General Government** budget provides a 2% increase in statutory revenue sharing payments to strengthen local police and fire protection services to help keep neighborhoods and families safe. This increase is the first statutory revenue sharing in seven years to go to local communities. Communities rely on this funding for local

police, firefighters, water systems, road maintenance and other vital services.

Other departments receiving increases include the **Department of Community Health** which received a \$490 million increase, maintaining Medicaid coverage for 19- and 20-year-olds, the Healthy Michigan fund, and Medicaid payments to provider groups. Also included is funding for pilot mental health courts.

The **Department of Labor and Economic Growth** budget will see an \$86.1 million increase, which includes \$15 million in state funds and \$50 million in federal funds for the No Worker Left Behind job training program, and additional funding for the MI Nursing Corps program.

The **Higher Education** budget will see an increase, with the state’s 15 public universities each receiving a 1 percent increase in funding and community colleges receiving a 2.1 percent increase. And the **Department of History, Arts and Libraries** will see increases for arts and cultural grants.

Increases were also provided for the **Department of Natural Resources, Judiciary**, and the **Department of Military and Veterans Affairs**.

As of this writing, the **Transportation** and **Capital Outlay** budgets have yet to see action, but we are hopeful they will be resolved soon to avoid the divisive down-to-the-wire negotiations we witnessed last year.

Fiscal Year (FY) 2008-2009 Budget Information			
Estimated FY 2008-09 Foundation Allowances			
	FY 2008 Per Pupil Foundation	FY 2009 Per Pupil Foundation	Per Pupil Increases
Detroit School District	\$ 7,557	\$ 7,660	+ \$ 103
Dearborn	\$ 9,027	\$ 9,083	+ \$ 56
River Rouge	\$ 9,048	\$ 9,104	+ \$ 56
Community Colleges Budget			
	FY 2008	FY 2009	Increases
Henry Ford CC	\$ 20,524,100	\$ 20,898,800	+ 1.8%
Wayne County CC	\$ 15,586,500	\$ 15,889,900	+ 1.9%
Higher Education Budget			
	FY 2008	FY 2009	Increases
Wayne State University	\$ 219,046,500	\$ 221,237,000	+ 1.0%
U of M – Dearborn	\$ 25,295,000	\$ 25,548,000	+ 1.0%
Revenue Sharing			
	FY 2008	FY 2009	Increases
Detroit	\$ 272,703,760	\$ 276,881,400	+ 1.5%
Dearborn	\$ 9,483,238	\$ 9,541,424	+ .6%
River Rouge	\$ 1,481,408	\$ 1,497,701	+ 1.1%

MANDATORY KINDERGARTEN – Let's Lead!

Recently there has been renewed interest in mandatory Kindergarten instruction as many public school districts look for ways to improve school systems as well as maintain student enrollments. Senator Clark-Coleman recently wrote an article in celebration of nearly 80 years of Kindergarten education. Following is an excerpt from that article.

For nearly 80 years, Kindergarten has been delivered primarily as a half-day program. But years of research have now shown that full-day Kindergarten gives children an academic, social and developmental edge over their half-day counterparts.

Full-day Kindergarten provides continuity for children who are used to all-day experiences outside the home. It offers stability with 1st grade schedules and beyond. It also reduces the number of disruptions children experience

in a given day, and it allows teachers more time for both formal and informal instruction.

Studies have also shown that children who attend full-day Kindergarten benefit from the extended learning hours and consistent learning curriculum regardless of their ethnic or economic group.

That's why I have re-introduced my legislation to require full-day Kindergarten instruction and mandatory enrollment of five-year-olds in Kindergarten classes. Today,

14 states make Kindergarten mandatory, nine states require full-day Kindergarten, and 60 percent of kindergartners attend a full-day program.

If Michigan is serious about its commitment to education, we must become a leader in innovative and effective education strategies. And if we're sincere about producing an educated workforce to make our economy competitive, we must give students the tools they need. All-day Kindergarten will help provide that competitive edge.

Small Schools Now, Big Results Later

In Michigan, one out of every four high schools has failed to meet goals mandated by the federal No Child Left Behind Act for at least two years. And increasing drop-out rates continue to plague our education system.

While there are various reasons for these declines, school size is often cited as a contributing factor. Smaller schools produce improved attendance rates, better test scores, increased participation in extracurricular activities and higher graduation rates. They also appear to encourage higher levels of parental involvement and better communication between parents and teachers.

Teachers in small schools feel they can be more influential in student learning than in larger schools. And there appears to be a strong correlation between smaller school size and

improved performance among poor students in urban school districts.

Governor Granholm has proposed the 21st Century Schools Fund to help Michigan school districts replace large, impersonal high schools that have not made Adequate Yearly

students achieve high academic performance. They would be held accountable to goals based on academic achievement, graduation rates, and college enrollments. Grand Rapids and Battle Creek are already seeing positive results from similar efforts.

To initiate such a program, \$15 million has been allocated in the upcoming budget to fund this initiative. While the amount is significantly less than Governor Granholm's original proposal, it's a start.

The bottom line is that we must offer something different.

We cannot continue doing the same thing without seeing progress or results. I am hopeful that this pilot will demonstrate the advantages and opportunities that smaller schools provide.



Progress for at least two consecutive years with small high schools. These schools would employ strong personal relationships, consistent discipline, and real-world relevance to help at-risk